

Organizational overview

The Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA (CEDC) was incorporated in 1997. The CEDC mission is to create a more just local economy by building bridges to resources, networks, and cooperative action for low and moderate-income members of our community.

Community or constituency to be served by the organization

Clearly identifies the neighborhoods, towns and/or cities to be served including population and demographics, geographic characteristics.

The Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern Massachusetts is primarily focused on the city of New Bedford and more specifically in the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor located in the North End of New Bedford.

The City of New Bedford, located in the Southeastern quadrant of the state, is a coastal city, a seaport, bordered on the west by Dartmouth, on the north by Freetown, on the east by Acushnet and Fairhaven and on the south by Buzzards Bay. It is located 60 miles south of Boston. It is the seventh largest city in the state with a population of 95,072. Over the years, New Bedford has suffered from deindustrialization and job loss as well as isolation from more vibrant hubs of economic development located in other parts of the Commonwealth. New Bedford still struggles with double the unemployment rate as the rest of the state.

New Bedford is the largest offshore commercial fishing port in the Eastern United States and is the leading port in the country in dollar value of seafood landed. In fact, for the 13th consecutive year, New Bedford's commercial value of its fishing catch (80% scallop fishing) according to NOAA Fisheries had a value of \$411 million in 2013, an increase over the total catch of \$369 million in 2011.

New Bedford is a racially diverse, working class city, and its economic development and local cultural character have been inextricably linked to generations of industrious and enterprising immigrants and migrants from many corners of the globe.

The Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern Massachusetts services the Massachusetts gateway municipality of New Bedford.

New Bedford has been a gateway to newcomers who have raised families and built new lives in the city. At the same time, immigrant integration presents unique opportunities and challenges, as 38% of New Bedford households speak a language other than English at home.

Educational attainment is also a key issue impacting the city's economic and workforce development landscape as fewer than 15% of residents have college degrees, compared to nearly 39% statewide. The high school dropout rate is 54% and 62% of English language

learners fail to receive a high school diploma. 71% of New Bedford's school children received free or reduced lunch in 2010. Low educational attainment and lack of jobs result in New Bedford's median income of \$36,172 compared to \$64,509 for the statewide median income.

In the 2010 Census, New Bedford's Latino population surged from less than 10,000 in 1990 to nearly 16,000 or 8.6% of the population. Currently 28% of the school-age population in New Bedford is classified as Hispanic. CEDC has been one of the leading local organizations to support this growing community during the past 10 years by offering programs and services in both English and Spanish (and Portuguese to a more limited extent). New Bedford residents of Portuguese and Cape Verdean ancestry comprise more than 38% of the City's population. The African-American population of New Bedford is 6.4% and persons reporting two or more races in the Census 2010 comprise 5.7% of the city.

Although the CEDC began as a regional and citywide CDC, it has recently focused its place-based efforts on the city's North End Acushnet Ave. Commercial Corridor and neighborhood where the CEDC office is located. The North End of New Bedford is geographically bordered by Purchase/Church Street to the west, Logan Street to the south, the Acushnet River to the east, and Nash Road to the North.

Historically, most of the buildings within this neighborhood were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The neighborhood was a mill area, which had access to the rail line. Housing is typically three-family apartments built throughout the area to accommodate mill workers. These large mills framed the neighborhood and were the economic engine at the time.

According to the 2010 Census Data, the median household income of the North End of New Bedford is \$21,741, compared to \$36,172 in New Bedford and \$64,509 statewide. It is an economically depressed area with 46% of individuals and families having income that fell below the poverty level in the past 12 months, compared to almost 20% in New Bedford and 7% in the state of Massachusetts. As of the 2010 census, there were approximately 15,342 residents in the area, comprising almost 16% of the total New Bedford population.

In terms of race and ethnicity, the North End Corridor is 54% white, 33% Hispanic, 5% black, 5% other or more than one race. Languages spoken at home include 53% English, 26% Spanish and 21% Portuguese. Additionally, many Guatemalan immigrants speak K'iche and are limited Spanish speakers. Many Cape Verdean immigrants speak Cape Verdean Kriolu in addition to Portuguese. . These immigrants have basic literacy challenges learning English, and they are in need of additional support and services.

Within the Acushnet Avenue Corridor specifically, the average household is 2.08 people, median age is 33.8 years, and those under 18 years of age are 26.2% of the population. Unemployment is high at 32.3% and 78% of neighborhood grandparents take care of grandchildren.

The median household income of this neighborhood is \$19,760 (New Bedford \$37,493), per capita income \$17,712 (New Bedford \$21,558), percent of persons relying on SNAP 34.7% (New Bedford 22.4%), percent of persons below the Federal Poverty Level 31.3% (New Bedford 21%), and percent of children under 5 years of age living below the Federal Poverty Level 60.6% (New Bedford 35.6%).

In terms of land use, there are 18 single-family homes, 113 two- and three- family homes, 29 buildings with four or more apartments, and 18 commercial and industrial buildings. Most residents are renters. There is an overall 15.9% overall vacancy rate with a homeowner vacancy rate of 14.4% and a rental vacancy rate of 5.7%.

As a Gateway City, New Bedford ranks third regarding largest ESOL waiting list, with 1,154 on that list with only a few organizations providing ESOL education. 15,181 people over five years old speak English less than “very well,” with 17.2% speaking English less than “very well.”

The area is economically diverse with retail/commercial, restaurants, cafes and bakeries, light manufacturing, warehousing, fishing industry support and processing, reuse and recycling. There is a high level of economic industry in the Brook Street, Hicks-Logan, Riverside Mill, Belleville Avenue, Coggeshall Street and Interstate 195, Nash Road-Church Street and the Acushnet Avenue neighborhoods.

Within the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor, there is broad retail and commercial mix that is highly immigrant-owned. It is self-contained, walkable and very diverse.

Many pressing issues have been identified in this particular corridor including crime, parking, litter and cleanliness and overall general appearance and blight. There is a gap in terms of medical providers, human services and arts organizations.

Involvement of community residents and stakeholders

Provide description and evidence of resident and stakeholder engagement

For over 13 years, the CEDC has focused on understanding the needs of local residents and businesses through active engagement with the community. It has been a priority of the CEDC to achieve resident, general membership and Board interest and participation in its philosophy and practice.

Above all, its ongoing close connection and engagement with the community on a daily basis gives rise to patterns of needs and issues that it incorporates into its planning. CEDC has a history of mobilizing the residents in the community in terms of community and neighborhood planning efforts whether initiated by CEDC or another entity such as municipal government. The staff of the CEDC works directly with the residents and civic and small business stakeholders. The executive director, founder of the organization, also spends a great deal of time with the residents, civic and small business allies and with other nonprofits, other partners and collaborators.

The CEDC is led by twelve diverse Board members that have had direct experience with the work of the CEDC as program participants, volunteers or as community partners. Since the board of directors is representative of the community, it is in tune with the critical needs and issues of concern to the Acushnet Avenue Corridor, New Bedford and the region as a whole.

Below is a sampling of how the residents are actively engaged in all that the CEDC does in the community. As with any community-organizing model, the CEDC utilizes one-on-one personal interactions, small groups and group actions to solve problems, build strategies and plan for community. It is often the only time these key constituents feel valued and heard in the process of community transformation.

CEDC is currently the only resource in Southeastern Massachusetts to provide micro business technical assistance services in both English and Spanish. These businesses face language barriers in accessing basic information from city regulatory departments who lack bilingual staff. Immigrant entrepreneurs also face challenges negotiating with landlords, utility companies, insurance brokers, etc. to open their doors. Given its location and focus in the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor, the organization is in frequent contact with storeowners through door-to-door outreach to help facilitate their role as key stakeholders in Commercial Corridor revitalization efforts. CEDC is currently convening Acushnet Avenue business owners to address common problems and to work on joint events and activities.

One of the organizations key community organizing initiatives, Bus Riders United, engages bus riders in Southeastern Massachusetts at regular bus rider meetings, mobilizing members to attend rallies and give testimony at public hearings. These bus riders are working poor, low income, disabled individuals and seniors who have historically been left out of the decision-making process for public transportation in the region. Bus Riders United engages these riders to advocate for expanded service and representation in the Southeastern Mass Regional Transit Authority decision-making bodies.

From January to April, the CEDC sees hundreds of families and seniors who receive free tax preparation at its office as part of the IRS affiliated Volunteers In Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The organization connects with low-income households and that allows them firsthand to witness the struggles of working poor families and seniors. Tax season also presents an opportunity to engage taxpayers about community needs and outreach. For example, it worked closely with the Census 2010, and in 2011 it partnered with an UMass-Dartmouth Public Policy class to evaluate banking habits of low-income households. In 2012, it helped enroll taxpayers for free energy audits, and in 2013, it has been promoting its new time bank initiative.

For over a decade, CEDC has worked with the new immigrant community primarily from Central America. CEDC has been successful in gaining the trust in this hard to reach community. As the Latino population has grown in New Bedford (an increase of 66% from 2000), government agencies, private companies and many non-profits have failed to address the needs of this new population. Because there are few places where these newcomers have been able to turn, CEDC has been on the front lines working with them on a daily basis to

troubleshoot their public safety, legal or health problems. The time spent in uncovering and linking immigrants to very limited resources grounds the organization in the realities and challenges faced by this new and often disenfranchised population.

Since New Bedford is the largest commercial offshore fishing port in the Eastern United States, all of its major initiatives involve fishing families and members of New Bedford's working waterfront. For instance, CEDC has been working to expand bus routes to serve the waterfront to accommodate seafood-processing workers. It is also a part of an effort to help improve public safety for working waterfront workers who have been frequently victimized by violent robberies and assaults along the waterfront.

As part of its VITA tax preparation program, CEDC works extensively with fishing community members, many of whom are limited English speaking. It has helped fishing families in need in New Bedford through receiving free tax preparation services, information about tax benefits and obligations in English, Spanish and Portuguese, and also offers troubleshooting with tax issues with the IRS and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue year-round.

Degree to which residents and stakeholders were engaged in the development of the plan.

The Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern Massachusetts engaged in a full-scale strategic planning process to specifically inform its CIP. Through this process, CEDC sought community resident and stakeholder involvement in several key ways.

The first way that the CEDC sought stakeholder investment is through its lead role in organizing key community visioning and planning sessions through the Great Neighborhoods Initiative that is still in its infancy.

The CEDC, as lead convener, in conjunction with the New Bedford Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD), is co-hosting several community stakeholder and resident engagement sessions as part of the Acushnet Avenue Corridor Great Neighborhoods Initiative. The Acushnet Avenue Corridor is the specific "place-based" neighborhood in which the CEDC is intentionally focusing its efforts on.

This engagement builds on previous efforts of the CEDC to engage and involve hard-to-reach residents in the Brownfields Redevelopment and the ongoing Acushnet Avenue streetscape improvement and redesign planning processes.

The Great Neighborhoods Initiative is a place-based program of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance. It supports local people working on smart growth projects in their communities. Great Neighborhoods partners with local residents, community leaders and municipal and state officials to support their work in creating affordable homes, preserving and creating open space, building alternative transportation infrastructure and engaging in placemaking. It is based upon transforming the way people relate to each other in those places through working together on shared goals and vision.

The first of these meetings included a group of key commercial corridor leaders to start the initial planning process, develop the structure for community engagement, build planning momentum and mobilize a wider base of community participation within this process. This important meeting was attended by key city and neighborhood partners representing the community including local churches, nonprofits, city government, schools and small businesses located within the corridor.

Discussion at this session focused on mapping of the Acushnet Avenue Corridor assets, challenges, key sites and stakeholders so that important neighborhood and community decisions are not made in isolation. Things that emerged through this process both in large and small group work included the need for health services, safety and security concerns such as crime and traffic, public park accessibility, the physical appearance of the corridor, diversity of the neighborhood, reuse of vacant properties into usable public space and the need for better after school care.

Further meetings are planned for 2014 to begin to include more wide-based community stakeholder representation.

The second way that CEDC sought resident and community stakeholder engagement was through directly involving residents and stakeholders in their internal strategic planning process as part of the strategic planning process team. In fact, the kickoff to the strategic planning process was a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Those participating at the SWOT included staff, Board of directors, volunteers, program participants and small business owners, who helped inform the process regarding key critical issues. During this session, participants were given an overview of the CIP and strategic planning process. Then, they were asked to identify organizational internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats.

Further, CEDC held a strategic planning retreat session with Board of Directors and staff to determine future goals and strategies to align with community vision. This session focused on determining goals within the CDC framework and “theory of change” model of building community through resident engagement, enhancing place and improving the quality of life for residents.

Description of the role of residents and stakeholders in monitoring and implementing plan activities

As with all CEDC projects, residents are directly involved in implementation through identifying concerns, receiving support and assistance and through volunteering directly in the program. For example, residents are sharing their talents and services through the CEDC time banking exchange system thereby increasing use of the local economy. In cases of advocacy, it is the residents themselves who are advocating on their behalf for such things as public safety, health services or through increased access to public transportation. Resident participation is the lifeblood of the CEDC.

Plan Goals and Activities

Below are the goals of the CEDC as developed through community engagement sessions and strategic planning process. The CEDC Board of Directors discussed this CIP and formal adoption of the plan is pending the January 2014 Board of Directors meeting.

Community vision: To assist in the revitalization and transformation of the Acushnet Avenue Corridor by creating a vibrant place where all people can live and flourish with dignity, safety and economic opportunity.

CIP goals and activities cover the time frame of 2014 through 2019.

1. **Build community through providing a place where the residents, businesses and organizations of the Acushnet Avenue neighborhood can work together to create a healthy, safe and vibrant place to live, work and discover.**
 - **Expand its role as the lead convener in the Great Neighborhoods Partnership** as a forum of engaging community residents and merchant associations in place-making transformations and community-building dialogue and conversation to determine a strong vision, direction and unified yearly goal for this corridor.
 - **Increase partnerships in the Brownfields Planning Group** to determine best uses for abandoned and underutilized properties to meet community-designed vision and plans. Specifically, CEDC services as a bridge to those hard to reach neighborhood populations and keeps them engaged and apprised of the process.
 - **Evaluate existing partnership for effectiveness and establish new impactful ones to build and sustain the shared community vision** through collective impact.
 - **Increase use of the local economy through utilizing an innovative time exchange initiative to strengthen and build community.** Time banking allows for the elevation of community through valuing and respecting all individuals for the skills, information, experiences, resources, and connections of each individual. In the process of time banking, the entire community is strengthened, especially those most marginalized.

2. **Improve the Acushnet Avenue Corridor as a physical place where all residents may thrive and succeed in the local economy providing stability, safety and access to opportunities that these residents need to improve their lives. **Please note that this corridor has some of the lowest income New Bedford and Southeastern Massachusetts residents as outlined in community constituencies above.***
 - **Strengthen entrepreneurial and business assistance and development** within the corridor through providing technical assistance and small business development services expanding the number of businesses and jobs, particularly resident and immigrant-owned, operating within the corridor.

- **Increase accessibility and equitable fares for local public transportation including holiday, weekend and night service.** Work with the regional transit authority to continue to create new services and increase public transportation within the area.
 - **Advocate for increasing the number of protected bus shelters.**
 - **Create awareness of transportation options in order** to attract new public transportation riders, increase system utilization and change the way people think about public transportation and the local economy.
 - **Increase public safety within the corridor for business and residents** through strengthening the relationship between police, neighbors and the immigrant community.
 - **Explore the options for the use of vacant buildings** for business incubator options such as consignment shops, art galleries, arcades, “pop-up shops,” etc.
 - **Examine the utilization of vacant properties** to increase green space through innovative ideas such as “parklets,” community gardens, pocket parks, etc.
 - **Increase in city public services** to create a pleasant, livable environment by expanding number of trash collection bins, city trash pickup services and police presence.
 - **Conduct beautification and façade improvement** to decrease neighborhood blight and litter and increase storefront visibility.
 - **Create opportunities for public art projects** by engaging local residents with area artists to explore ideas and projects for place-making and community-building transformation.
 - **Expand awareness of the commercial fishing industry through increased engagement within the Working Waterfront Festival** to promote understand of the heritage and culture of the fishing industry and its preservation, and to increase critical dialogue amongst different community partners. The growing immigrant community often served by CEDC is the “invisible” backbone of the fishing industry.
3. **Transform the lives of those living in the Acushnet Avenue corridor through improving the quality of life for individuals and families and fostering new opportunities.**
- **Increase financial well-being and investment in the local economy** through VITA tax preparation services, which allows low-income residents the opportunity to invest within the regional economy. Last year alone, the VITA program helped taxpayers save over \$200,000 in fees from high-cost tax preparers and returned \$1.9 million to working families and seniors in refunds.
 - **Explore offering financial education programs** to increase financial savings and stability.
 - **Strengthen resident and immigrant owned businesses, acting as a “hub” within the Acushnet Avenue Corridor to create a thriving commercial corridor and vibrant neighborhood.** The CEDC will provide residents with the skills and assistance necessary to develop their own businesses, fuel the local economy and provide additional job opportunities for local residents to work.

CEDC is the only bilingual small business resource center in the entire region. In addition, the CEDC will provide **small business technology assistance** to build capacity and bridge the digital divide for immigrant-owned businesses (as well as other business owners) and non-profits.

- **Provide access and options for education for all residents increasing access to gainful employment** through English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training and native language literacy and computer training, so that all residents are better able to compete for jobs, earn a just living and enable them to be active participants in their community. Increased transportation options and accessibility will also aid in this transformation.
- **Increase immigrant integration services** by working and advocating with the increasingly diverse and low-income immigrant neighborhood populations. CEDC will continue to be a dynamic resource center for immigrants who face many gaps in services and programs providing them with the hand up that many need to achieve greater self-sufficiency and participation in the local economy.

Success will be measured/evaluated

Participants including residents were asked to evaluate the strategic planning process towards effectiveness of developing goals, objectives and evaluation tools. This evaluation took place immediately after the strategic planning process was completed. Monitoring of the plan will include key process participants such as Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, program participants and residents.

The Executive Director will present a mid-year report on the overall progress of the plan goals and objectives implementation to the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, program participants and residents. In addition, CEDC will facilitate an annual review of the plan, make adjustments necessary and discuss key aspects of learning to incorporate. Part of this yearly evaluation/monitoring process will also be to incorporate celebrations of successes. The yearly evaluation/monitoring process will include the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, program participants and residents.

Methods of Measurement

All of the program areas the CEDC works in involve extensive systems for outcomes measurement. Because the CEDC programs serve different constituencies, these outcome measurement tools are highly program specific, i.e. number of tax returns filed, number of people attending a rally, etc.

CEDC has had the opportunity to dig deeper in its small business technical assistance program to develop a logic model to not only quantify the number of businesses served but also to develop indicators of how a business is progressing as a start-up, stabilizing or growing business. In addition, CEDC is now tracking some of its walk-in traffic through a simple database, but still needs to refine the methodology to capture the outcomes of this direct service work.

CEDC measures success by having specific programmatic goals such as number of volunteers recruited, number of tax returns filed, micro businesses receiving technical assistance, number of people attending a Bus Riders United Rally, etc. The qualitative measures of deepening collaborations, building community relationships are no less valuable and very important to the process of community and economic development, although these process impacts may be more difficult to measure. As part of the Great Neighborhoods project, CEDC is working with evaluators to develop a system to measure the baseline and growth of a community network and web of effective working relationships.

CEDC is in constant dialog as a staff team and with community members and partners to evaluate and reflect on their impact. Because it is a small organization, it can make adjustments year-to-year to ensure that they are addressing real needs in the community.

Collaborative efforts to support implementation

Existing and proposed collaborative relationships with other stakeholders

The CEDC of Southeastern Massachusetts has a long history of building collaborations and partnerships as the backbone of their work in the community. Below is a comprehensive listing of the CEDC's collaborative partnerships.

Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor Revitalization – Great Neighborhoods

The Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor Revitalization effort is part of a broader project to attempt to create a Great Neighborhoods network on the South Coast.

The Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor Revitalization Project has allowed CEDC to engage with a broad cross-section of business, government and community stakeholders to identify projects and partnerships important to creating Corridor Revitalization through greater collective impact.

CEDC is also seeking to engage arts-based organizations to understand how arts programming (like AHA!, a monthly, collaborative arts event in downtown New Bedford) has been successful in enhancing business districts. CEDC has in-house expertise with public arts projects and is currently working with Mary Beth Meehan, an acclaimed photojournalist, to create public art civic engagement projects modeled from her successful “The City of Champions” art exhibit in Brockton. Laura Orleans, director of the Working Waterfront Festival, a special project of CEDC, brings extensive collaboration building experience around arts programming and the fishing community.

Small Business Development

In Southeastern Massachusetts, resources for small business technical assistance are very limited. Recognizing these limitations, the **CEDC** works closely in partnership with others to provide a network of resources for these small and micro- businesses.

CEDC works closely with the **City of New Bedford** to share information about existing city programs to businesses. It also refers clients to Microloan Funds offered by the **New Bedford Economic Development Council** and by **SEED Corp.** in Taunton.

Businesses seeking to open a food-based business are referred to the **Dartmouth Grange Kitchen**, and CEDC often refers entrepreneurs who are developing a business idea to the Southeastern Regional office of the **Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network** in Fall River for business planning, training and technical assistance.

Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA) Tax Preparation

CEDC works very closely with **UMass-Dartmouth Office of Civic Engagement and Community Service** to mobilize volunteers for many CEDC programs. The VITA Program coordinates 35-40 student volunteers from January to April and is the organization's largest student volunteer program. The VITA program is a partnership with the **IRS** and citywide outreach is conducted in collaboration with **PACE**. In addition to tax preparation at the CEDC office, they also hold off-site tax days at the **Immigrant's Assistance Center** in New Bedford, **UMass-Dartmouth** and the **New Bedford Housing Authority**.

Bus Riders United

Bus Riders United (BRU) engages bus riders and a labor-community coalition of over 30 organizations to advocate for expanded service and representation in the Southeastern Mass Regional Transit Authority decision-making bodies. BRU is the only organization advocating for the rights of bus riders and for the accessibility and increased utilization of public transportation. BRU achieved a major victory in 2013 by helping to secure holiday and night service after 6 PM for the first time in 30 years.

Southeastern Massachusetts Time Banking Initiative

CEDC is a key partner in the **Southeastern Massachusetts Time Banking Initiative**, a regional membership based time bank. Time banks are mechanisms to exchange community goods and services such as tutoring, childcare, carpentry, guitar lessons, etc. between community members. CEDC is a partner with the **UMass-Dartmouth Leduc Center for Civic Engagement and Fall River Partners** to host two Time Bank AmeriCorps Vista members. The goal of time banking is to strengthen and build community through community-based exchanges and to create economic alternatives in New Bedford and Fall River.

BRU was first formed as a community-labor coalition comprised of representatives from **Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), CEDC, Coalition for Social Justice, the Southeastern Massachusetts Central Labor Council and the UMass Dartmouth Labor Education Center in conjunction with People First!**

Immigrant Integration Services

CEDC is a member of the **English Works Campaign** that is part of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (**MIRA**). **English Works** spearheads statewide efforts to increase workplace ESOL programs and has partnered with the **CEDC, the City of**

New Bedford Community Services and the Immigrants Assistance Center to build the infrastructure for community-based English classes and other immigrant integration programs in New Bedford.

This collaboration led to the development of the **New Americans Immigrant Integration AmeriCorps program** that has made available a full-time AmeriCorps member to be hosted at the CEDC to provide direct service and English classes.

Special Project of CEDC - The Working Waterfront Festival

The Working Waterfront Festival, a special project of CEDC, now in its 10th year, attracts 17,000 annual visitors. The festival has become an important annual event to gather members of the fishing community and wider community in New Bedford and New England to celebrate the fishing community's history and heritage through occupational demonstrations and contests, panel discussions, food ways demonstrations, films and exhibits with the primary aim of engagement in interpreting, presenting and preserving the traditional culture of the commercial fishing industry.

The festival creates a forum for many different organizations to have dialogue between groups with strained or non-existent relationships. Increasingly, it is tapped as a resource to provide information about commercial fishing culture and issues to journalists, the tourism industry, cultural organizations and others.

The CEDC is extending this work by taking the successful programming of the two-day festival and presenting it through a series of events during the course of the year to area students through in-school presentations and summer camps. These events are produced with a steering committee comprised of representatives from collaborating organizations with strong ties to the fishing industry and/or extensive public programming experience.

Other collaborations and partnerships

CEDC is also a member of several local coalitions and partnerships including the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance Advisory Board, New Bedford Community Connections Advisory Board, Massachusetts Tax and Asset Building Consortium, SE Mass Transit Alliance, United Way of Greater New Bedford Community-Building founding partner and Mini-Grants Review Committee member, South Coast Serves, Southeastern Massachusetts Central Labor Council, Coalition for Social Justice, Massachusetts Association of CDC's Board, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Board and the Legal Center for Nonprofits Board.

Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy and vision

The CEDC utilizes the Massachusetts Community Development Corporations (CDC's) "Theory of Change" model to engage local residents and business to work together to create community transformation towards a shared community vision.

Community vision and goals: To assist in the revitalization and transformation of the Acushnet Avenue Corridor by creating a vibrant place where all people can live and flourish with dignity, safety and economic opportunity.

It all begins with building a strong community through organizing and engagement of ALL residents. From there, the CEDC works to strengthen the physical “place” of the Acushnet Avenue Corridor by increasing public safety, business development and transportation access. By engaging ALL residents, businesses, non-profits and municipal government to create change and alter place, lives are transformed.

Increased access to transportation allows residents to get and go to jobs; ESOL increases English fluency; bi-lingual technical assistance provides resident-owned businesses with all the resources needed to create a flourishing local economy; and immigrant integration services provide newly arriving immigrants with the services they need to begin life anew.

Ultimately, the “Theory of Change” model leads to a transformed community of which the residents of the Acushnet Avenue corridor desire and envision. This plan works in tandem and is consistent with the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance’s Great Neighborhood initiative to provide a civic engagement forum to include all key stakeholders in discussions about community transformation as well as the Brownfields Redevelopment Planning Group effort, neighborhood groups and other initiatives and city-related planning processes.

Financing Strategy

Description of how the CDC will finance implementation of the Plan’s activities

The organization has historically relied upon state grants and contracts and private foundations for its contributed income. It has a limited history of fund development planning and implementation. As a result, a focus will be the development of a comprehensive contributed income strategy to finance the activities of this plan.

In order to meet the mission, vision and strategic goals and objectives of its strategic plan, the organization must implement a financing strategy that can help it meet its goals while reducing its reliance on traditional revenue streams without engaging in “mission creep.”

It is critical that within this fund development plan, that fundraising mirrors the “bottom up” approach that it provides to the community. The community being served must be an active participant in this process to collectively build and support its vision.

Steps towards plan financing will include:

Case for support

A fundraising case for support is the critical foundational component of an effective fund development program. Without one, the organization’s efforts lack clarity and focus. Thus, the first step is developing a fundraising “case for support” or rationale for fund development that tells a concrete story about the organization, its mission, vision and plan.

CEDC will develop a strong case for support and then conduct an informational communications campaign around the “case for support” creating strong publicity for the cause and the CITC program.

Board development

In order to build stronger fund development capacity, the organization must undergo a process of strengthening its current Board of Directors. The Board must be a leader of and facilitator for peer-to-peer fund development.

Currently, the Board represents community partners and residents and other key stakeholders. The Board composition needs to be examined in light of financial sustainability to obtain more partners who can open doors to individual donors of influence and affluence.

In addition, the Board needs to orient itself to its role within the fund development process. Training sessions will be held at Board meetings in 2014 to educate members on their role, expectations and ways in which they can lead in building a sustainable organization. The organization needs to build a strong “culture of philanthropy” that supports its financial stability.

Grants management

CEDC has had strong success with obtaining grants for its current programming. CEDC will work to identify grants through developing a comprehensive grants management plan by conducting intensive grant research through the Foundation Center Online and other grant prospect research sources. Grants management plan will contain a month-by-month schedule of identified grant proposal submission deadlines.

Individual giving

The organization must begin to actively seek individual giving prospects and to build a donor base. Individual giving will allow the organization to become less reliant on state and grant funding while allowing it to be more true to its mission to the community.

As mentioned above, the organization must develop a case for support that resonates with donors. Then the organization must identify donors who might have an interest and capacity to support the organization. This process can be done through Board and volunteer prospect identification and rating sessions.

CEDC will make a concerted effort to connect with local banks who may not be currently supporting the CEDC to learn about the CITC and the possible Community Reinvestment Act opportunity. The case for support must be packaged with tax credit incentives and used to identify prospective donors through a series of group “road shows” or individual cultivation visits to determine prospective donor interest in supporting the organization.

Community advisors

CEDC views the United Way of Greater New Bedford, the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Women’s Fund of Greater New Bedford as natural partners. It will seek to develop natural alliances with these organizations to be able to offer the CITC investment through partnering with them on campaign and donor materials and outreach

Special event(s)

The organization will begin to build “brand” and community awareness of its work, particularly with the CITC tax incentive. As a result, it will consider hosting one small, community event to raise funds, build greater awareness of its mission/vision and the tax credit opportunity and begin to build its supporter base.

Direct mail campaign

The organization must begin to build its base of consistent supporters and direct mail is one of the main ways to continue to build a strong fund development “pipeline.” Thus, the organization will continue to “prospect” year round to develop a growing mailing list consisting of stakeholders, interested community partners, donors and small businesses. The organization will plan to mail at least once the first year to begin to cultivate a “culture” of giving to the organization.

Database and gift acknowledgement

It is not enough to have a fund development process in place. There must be systems in place to adequately build a donor base. The organization will invest in a low-cost, highly-effective solution to capturing prospective donor names, record contribution amounts and capture prospect information. There are many systems on the market and the organization will resource as necessary to choose the most suitable for a beginning development effort. The organization will ensure through staff and volunteer assistance that it can accurately and timely acknowledge all donations to the organization.

Communications

CEDC is currently working with a marketing consultant who is providing the organization with a logo, website, social media and other communication updates. In addition, this consultant will be working with the organization to develop a full-scale, yearly communications plan to be able to take the mission/vision of the organization out to the general community and to its prospective and current donor base.

Social benefit methods

In addition, CEDC will also consider implementing income-generating social enterprise ventures exploring the use of vacant space developing business incubators for markets as outlined in its goal two above.

History, Track Record and Sustainable Development

Track Record of Past Practices

The CEDC has an extensive record and track record of past practices and approaches to the implementation of this CIP. It has been a priority of the CEDC to achieve resident, general membership and Board interest and participation in its core philosophy and practice. The ongoing close connection and engagement with the community on a daily basis gives rise to patterns of needs and issues incorporated into the CIP.

CEDC is currently the only resource in Southeastern Mass to provide micro business technical assistance services in English and Spanish. These businesses face language barriers

in accessing basic information from city regulatory departments who lack bilingual staff. Immigrant entrepreneurs also face challenges negotiating with landlords, utility companies, insurance brokers, etc. to open their doors. Given its location and focus in the Acushnet Ave. Commercial Corridor, it is in frequent contact with storeowners and has been involved in frequent door-to-door outreach to help facilitate their role as key stakeholders in Commercial Corridor revitalization efforts.

CEDC's key organizing initiatives, Bus Riders United, engages bus riders in Southeastern Massachusetts at regular bus riders meetings. These bus riders are working poor, low income, disabled individuals, seniors who have historically been left of the decision-making process of public transportation in the region. Bus Riders United engages these riders to advocate for expanded service and representation in the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Transit Authority decision-making bodies.

From January to April, the CEDC sees hundreds of families and seniors who receive free tax preparation at its office. It connects with low-income taxpayers who come back every year and witness firsthand the struggles of working poor families and seniors. Tax season also presents an opportunity to engage taxpayers about community needs and outreach. During tax time, CEDC has been involved in several projects such as collecting data for the UMass Dartmouth "unbanked" in Greater New Bedford whitepaper on low-income banking habits. In addition, the CEDC has promoted weatherization and energy audits as a partner of New Bedford Energy Now!.

CEDC has worked for more than a decade with the new immigrant community primarily from Central America. CEDC has been successful in gaining trust in this hard to reach community. It provides critical, much needed services for this disenfranchised and often marginalized population group.

There are several ways that the organization lives out the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles:

Concentrate development and mix uses and protect land and ecosystems

The organization approaches community development in a holistic and integrated way to promote economic and sustainable development.

The organization supports community revitalization of Greater New Bedford and in particular the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor through promoting development that conserves land, revitalizes and reuses old buildings and sites, preserves historic resources and integrates uses. The neighborhood focus of its work in the Acushnet Avenue Corridor is to create a compact, walkable community where neighborhood residents sustain locally owned businesses. In addition, it has always engaged in community planning through active engagement within the community.

Advance equity

The CEDC as an organization provides technical assistance for inclusive community planning and decision making to ensure social, economic and environmental justice. In fact, CEDC

seeks to be a change agent to engage environmental justice communities to become effective stakeholders in community visioning and planning. In addition, the CEDC plays a critical role in reaching out and engaging non-English speaking community residents in the Brownfields Redevelopment public meeting process and will continue to be bridge with city government as the process moves forward.

Make efficient decisions and uses natural resources wisely

The CEDC supports the efforts of a SouthCoast Great Neighborhoods Initiative that is advocating for greater coordination and collaboration among and across state and local governments to support smart growth through its participation in the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance. In addition, it has worked in strong collaboration with the City of New Bedford Brownfields Initiative to invest in, restore and utilize abandoned and environmentally “tainted” properties to meet the community vision of increasing open, safe space and youth and other recreational opportunities.

Provide transportation choices and plan regionally

CEDC has been in the forefront to advocate for significant changes in regional public transportation including expanded bus service and the South Coast Rail. These efforts are critically important to promoting economic development and to address climate change. Throughout its history, it has been the main proponent and the voice of expanding and increasing access to public transportation options that maximize community resident mobility, especially for those most in need, reduce traffic congestion and conserve natural resources.

Increase job and business opportunities

CEDC has recently celebrated its 18-year anniversary as a Community Development Corporation. They are a unique CDC, in that their work focuses on building community capacity through small business development and workforce development programs. They have a successful and consistent track record of accomplishing their goals and creating positive outcomes for hundreds of community residents every year through providing technical assistance and support creating increased business opportunities.

Promote clean energy

CEDC is a partner of New Bedford Energy Now!, which provides awareness of weatherization and energy audit programs for low to moderate-income households. CEDC plays an important role in reaching out to and engaging non-English speaking families about energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.

Expand housing opportunities

Although the CEDC is not directly involved in building and construction of affordable housing units, through its direct service and advocacy work, it provides resource and referral to affordable housing options, first-time home buyer classes, landlord tenant dispute resolution, housing discrimination, foreclosure and homelessness prevention and other related-housing services.